(b) whether Government also propose to build such housing complexes for bidi workers at other locations in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) to (c) Com. Godutai Paruleker Mahila Bidi Kamgar Sahakari Gruhnirman Sanstha Maryadit A/B/C, Solapur, a cooperative society of women beedi workers have undertaken a project of construction of 10,000 houses under the Integrated Housing Scheme (IHS) under which the Government is granting financial assistance of Rs. 40,000/- per house or 50% of the actual cost of construction per tenement, whichever is less, to the Individual Beedi Workers/Group Housing Society/State Government for the construction of house throughout the country. Earlier the financial assistance was available @Rs. 20,000/- per house. Besides following cooperative societies of beedi workers of Solapur have also been granted financial assistance under the scheme.

(i) 309 houses by M/s Narsinha Bidi Kamgar Sahakari Gruha Ninnan Sanstha Maryadit, Solapur.

(ii) 277 houses by M/s Shree Swami Samarth Bidi Kamgar Sahakari Gruha Nirman Sanstha Maryadit, Kumbhari, Tah. South Solapur.

The benefits under the scheme are available to beedi workers irrespective of their gender all over the country.

Harassment of Indian workers in foreign countries

132. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that hundreds of Indians working in countries like Singapore are harassed and they are not paid the contracted salary by some companies;

(b) what action has been taken by Government to provide them assistance to help them out; and

(c) whether Government would instruct the Indian Embassies in the respective countries to help Indian workers in getting justice?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Two cases of non-payment of wages to Indian workers by Singapore Construction Companies have been brought to the notice of the Government. The High Commission of India, Singapore intervened effectively. The High Commissioner met the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Manpower, Government of Singapore. As a result the workers were able to get partial payment of their dues plus free return air passage to India.

(c) There are standing instructions to the Indian Missions and Posts to safeguard the interest of all Indian nationals including workers employed abroad.

New scheme for interest rate on employees provident fund

133. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to offer differential rates of interest on Employees Provident Fund to workers with different EPF deposits, the rate being higher for low deposits below certain levels;

(b) if so, the details of the new scheme; and

(c) the reaction of different national labour unions thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Job opportunities in agricultural and industrial sectors

134. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that job opportunities in agricultural and industrial sectors of the country are on the decline; and

(b) the estimated annual rates of increase in the number of job seekers in both the sectors?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) Estimates of employment and